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but by suffering also, and both are necessary, says Vergil, for the formation of the highest manhood. In the *Aeneid*, also, in that portion which is read by high school students, the same great truth is set before us. Both Aeneas and Dido are what they are because of what they have done and suffered. It finds noble expression in that deathless line spoken by the Queen when she receives the shipwrecked Trojans: "Well do I know sorrow, and it teaches me to aid those in distress". It was this sympathy, born from her own sad life, which had moved her to paint upon the walls of her temple the sad picture of Troy's overthrow—the picture which wrings from Aeneas, as he gazes upon it, a cry of woe over the heaviness of his burden, a prayer that he might put from him his cup of suffering, but at the same time brings him comfort and inspiration and hope; it is the token of sympathy, the assurance that "human hearts are touched by human woe".

In this assurance of the value of suffering to the individual, Vergil found, in part at least, an explanation of its universality and a justification for it. But is even this enough to justify the sorrow of the Trojan women, as they sit there on the shore weeping for the dead Anchises, but weeping each one, as she gazes out over the sea, for her own sad lot? Is it enough to justify the broken heart of the old Evander, as he weeps over the body of his only son, the brave and beauteous Pallas? Is it enough to justify the tears of the fathers and mothers of our own day who have suffered the same loss which Evander suffered? To these questions, also, which, after all, are the real riddle of life, Vergil gives us an answer, and his answer is one which every young student of the *Aeneid* should know and ponder over. He found it in the story of his hero, a man of sorrow, whose dearest hopes lay buried in the dust of Troy, beneath the walls of which he fain would have fallen, and yet one who bore his burden bravely, with a smile upon his lips in spite of the deep woe in his heart, because he knew that he was striving toward an ideal, aiding, however falteringly, in the carrying out of a divine purpose. To Vergil this ideal was Rome's work in the world, and this work was, as he himself expresses it, "to crown peace with law". Moments there were when Aeneas forgot, one poignant moment when he and Dido proved false to their own high character and to their ideals, and violated the moral law. Dido's punishment was death; Aeneas', a blasted hope and a broken heart, and a resumption of his cross to travel again his weary road. But in the light of Rome's work in the world, in the light of the lofty ideal which is held up to us in the writings of Cicero and Horace no less than in those of Vergil—the crowning of peace with law—we have both an explanation of the hardships of the individual and a justification of the ways of God to man.

Such, in part at least, is the message which comes to us from the intercourse with the great spirits of the Roman world. That we stand today in urgent need of their message no one, in the present state of things, will deny. For, as has lately been well said, it is not a contest of strength that the world faces, but of morals, and what our youth needs, therefore, is not so much the lessons to be learned from an investigation of birds and flowers and rocks, as the lessons to be learned from the reading and the study of good books. And not the least of these are the books of Cicero, Vergil, and Horace, which, for two thousand years, have nurtured the mind and spirit of man, and which speak to us of the dignity of toil, of the value of vicissitude for the upbuilding of character, of the responsibility of the individual, of the necessity of an ideal, if we are to gain a broader view of heaven's purposes and earth's needs,—such an ideal as that of Rome in her greatness, the crowning of peace with law.

C. K.

### PROMETHIUS BOUND OF AESCHYLUS<sup>1</sup>

It hardly seems as if anything could have been left unsaid or unthought about the Prometheus of Aeschylus in all these centuries. And yet, in considering the problems which such a drama undoubtedly presents, our minds are often beclouded by inherited traditions and prejudices concerning the ancient Greeks and their literature. We know that some of these traditions originated long ago in very dull and narrow minds; but we still preserve them by a kind of perverted scholarship. It may be that with respect to the Prometheus we have all been influenced, more or less unconsciously, by such traditions and prejudices. Moreover, it is certainly a mistake to attempt to synthesize, as many scholars are prone to do, all that the ancient Greeks have said on any subject, or even to interpret every saying of an ancient author by what the same author has said elsewhere. For example, it may be that the conception of Zeus presented in the Prometheus is fundamentally different from the conception of Zeus in the Agamemnon.

It is a dangerous practice also to interpret ancient literature as if it were modern. The danger lies in our natural tendency to project upon ancient times thoughts and feelings which are natural and common now, but which were alien to the ancient world, thereby ignoring the ideas and beliefs of the ancients which we have outgrown. On the other hand, it is equally dangerous to assume that the ancients thought and felt otherwise than we, especially if we hold, as we do, that among the ancient Greeks were some of the ablest minds which the human race has produced. This assumption would stretch every utterance of an ancient thinker upon the Procrustean bed of our traditional conception of the ancient world, and at the outset beg the question in the prosecution of any nonconformist.

There is an idea, which is present in much of our modern thinking on matters of religion, that, as the human race advances, the religious views of the more enlightened and spiritually-minded tend to become more and more remote from those more primitive notions embodied in a traditional literature and mythology, or in the creed and ritual prescribed by an organized priesthood, and preserved essentially unchanged by the religious conservatism and superstition of the masses. This may seem to some an essentially modern idea, and foreign to the ancient world. But it is certain at least that contemporaries of Aeschylus were convinced that the conceptions of the gods involved in their traditional literature and in popular belief were irreconcilable with what gods must be, if there are gods at all. It seems clear to me that Aeschylus also held this view. I do not mean merely that an interesting comparison may be drawn between the religious ideas of Aeschylus and our own; I mean that certain religious ideas similar to ours were consciously held by Aeschylus, and were deliberately

<sup>1</sup>This paper was read at the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of The Classical Association of the Atlantic States, held at Hunter College, April 23, 1921.

incorporated by him in this drama. If this is so, then we may properly seek to interpret this drama in accordance with these ideas.

The common interpretation of the Prometheus is that the poet took certain well-known myths, and with his artistic genius gave to them dramatic form. If these familiar stories are all this drama contains, there is no reason why anyone might not understand it completely, and doubtless this is all it did contain for the mass of Aeschylus's audience. These stories are presented in scenes which involve much that is theatrical or spectacular, amounting sometimes to what we should expect in a modern melodrama. How the audience must have enjoyed seeing Might and Force drag in the struggling Prometheus and hold him to the cliff, while the reluctant Hephaestus pinioned him! How they must have wondered at the sea-maidens arriving in their winged car, or at old Oceanus with his dragon! How the horned Io and the account of her wanderings must have interested them! How they must have been thrilled by the awful cataclysm at the end! What might seem to us ridiculous in these spectacles was not so for those who believed that these supernatural beings really existed, and who were familiar from childhood with stories of such occurrences. Theatrical effects seem to me characteristic of Aeschylus's plays, and the chief reason for their notorious popularity. Processions and spectacular scenes crowd the stage in the *Oresteia* and the *Seven Against Thebes*. These were plays which everyone, however unintelligent, could and did enjoy. And when we remember the extreme beauty of its verses, the sublime fortitude of its hero, and the pathos with which the innocent and pitiful Io is presented, we need not wonder at the success of the Prometheus.

But surely this is not all that the Prometheus contains. Justly it has been called the most profoundly moving drama of all literature. Profundity is not necessarily involved in the legends selected, and it cannot be by accident that through his presentation of these legends the poet awakens in us the deepest thoughts concerning the existence and nature of divinity. That Aeschylus produced a play suited to the comprehension of a crowd is evident. That the same play had a deeper meaning for the more thoughtful in his audience is also possible. Some modern scholars, seeking such a deeper meaning, see in this, as in many other Greek tragedies, human character exhibited on a supernatural scale. Prickard, for example, sees in Prometheus a mythological figure like Oedipus, in whom a human character struggling under overwhelming injustice and suffering is presented to view. But neither Prometheus nor Io is an obviously human type; the human traits they display are incidental rather than essential to this drama. Others hold that Prometheus is the uncompromising champion of liberty, crushed in the conflict with autocracy, ultimately to arise triumphant. But Prometheus in this drama is the benefactor of the human race, not a champion in any sense; Io is the innocent victim of a ruthless tyranny.

There is, however, another interpretation of this drama, which is at least more plausible. To many Prometheus is the heroic sinner, the rebel against the divine order of things-as-they-are, to which all should conform. Such persons hold that the essence of morality for the ancient Greeks was conformity to the transcendent rhythm of the universe, of which each individual is an integral part. From this point of view it was right and necessary that Prometheus should be 'rhythmized', that is, reduced, by torments if need be, to conformity. Thus they hold that Prometheus was for the Greeks a typically 'tragic' figure, involved by fate and circumstance in the hopeless antithesis of two resistless forces, in this case the passion for liberty and the duty of conformity; for us the balance is unequal and our sympathies are wholly with Prometheus, only because conformity to an organization of the universe which included the traditional Greek gods has ceased to be the ultimate morality.

But this explanation is not complete, not wholly satisfactory. It fails to account for certain features of this drama which constantly recur, forcing themselves upon our attention. Why, for example, is the statement so often reiterated that the gods, against whom Prometheus rebelled, are *new* and *transient*, even though themselves contrasted with ephemeral men? Or why are these gods, with the possible exception of Hephaestus, represented throughout as so extremely and repulsively anthropomorphic, wanton and vile? Why are these two legends, in which the gods appear at their very worst, united here, although there is nothing in the traditional mythology which associated Io directly with Prometheus? Why is it that, although Oceanus, Io, Hermes, and even the sea-maidens urge Prometheus to submit and conform, their pleas are made so weak and unconvincing? They must have seemed unconvincing even to the ancient Greeks as we commonly imagine them. How is it, finally, that the last scenes of the play glorify Prometheus's uncompromising resistance on the ground that the existing authority will be ultimately dethroned or transformed?

Of course Prometheus was a mythological figure, well known to all of Aeschylus's audience. And perhaps this was all he was to most. He is presented here in form more or less human, and with human characteristics. How else could he be presented on the Greek stage? Even such abstractions as Might and Force are presented here in human form. But, like many other mythological figures, Prometheus, as his name implies, is also a personification thinly veiled in the myth. Primarily it is the mythological figure which Aeschylus took as his hero, and conformably with the practice of the Greek tragedians he introduces into his drama nothing which is contradictory to the accepted legends. Within the bounds of this convention, however, the myths and mythological figures are made the vehicles of his thought.

Prometheus belonged to the ages of Uranus and of Cronus, as well as to this present age of Zeus. This

drama does not explain how Uranus was overthrown, but we are told how the fall of Cronus came about. When the Titans undertook to defend Cronus, Prometheus offered his services to them; their strength and his intelligence united would have sufficed perhaps to maintain the older order. But the Titans would have none of him; they chose to rely on force alone. Hence Prometheus, knowing that force without intelligence could not succeed against deceit, joined Zeus, a willing ally to a willing lord; Zeus the deceitful, guided by intelligence, was better than blind force. By the intelligence of Prometheus Zeus was enabled to overthrow Cronus and all the old régime of heaven, making himself supreme. By reason of the power thus acquired through Prometheus's aid Zeus assigned to each of the lesser gods his special rights and functions. Yet later in the play Prometheus says that this also was done by him and not by Zeus: 'Who else but me did make complete assignment to these new gods of all their several functions?'. Once enthroned, this Zeus became autocratic, violent, and ruthless; he neglected, then sought to destroy utterly the present human race. But Prometheus withstood him for the love he bore to man. He gave men hopes—blind hopes, it is true, but hopes that freed them from too anxious presage of an ultimate doom. He taught men all they know. Unthinking brutes before, he made them advance step by step through all the stages of their civilization. He gave them fire and taught its use, thereby making possible all those activities which depend on its employment. In short, as he says himself: 'All arts to mortals from Prometheus come'. Thus by Prometheus, and by him alone, there was provided for the race of men life which was comparable, in some respects at least, to that of the gods themselves.

Because he withstood Zeus and befriended man, Prometheus incurred the enmity of this new ruler of the universe, and therefore he was transfixed and pinioned upon the lonely crag at the uttermost limits of the world. Yet he foreknew that unless he, the prisoner, saved the tyrant, the tyrant himself would in time be overthrown, in consequence of some act which he would perpetrate unless he was deterred. What that act would be is not fully explained; only it would be a marriage, one more last sexual anthropomorphic union among the gods. But this deliverance of Zeus would not be effected unless Prometheus was delivered from these bonds. His release would not be by the hand of Zeus. The liberator who would release Prometheus would be one born of woman, descendant of Epaphos, the son of Io, whom Zeus would engender, not sexually, but by touch alone. Therefore Prometheus, though he suffered, would not submit to the tyranny of this upstart ruler, whom he himself had once enthroned. He knew that this ruler could not wholly destroy him, not though he heaped more torments, ten-fold more, upon his helpless head, and compassed the ruin of the earth and the sky in the outpourings of his wrath. Twice already Prometheus had seen such rulers of the universe swept

from their seats of power. He would yet live to see the present tyrants in their turn dethroned, if they would not submit themselves to his guidance and restraint. The time would come when he would be released from bondage, and then, if fate willed it, would this Zeus turn once more to seek his love and league with him, as eager as he would be eager for this new alliance.

What can this Prometheus be but reasoning, foreseeing Intelligence, which alone bestows on gods and men alike their powers and their prerogatives? There even seems to be a clear hint of this interpretation in the opening scene of the play, where Cratus says to Prometheus: 'Falsely the gods call thee Intelligence; thou thyself dost need intelligence to get thee clear of this skillful work of ours'. But this Intelligence may be enthralled and tortured by the very gods whom he has himself enthroned, and then some one of the race of men must needs release him.

Who are these gods, these new and transient gods, who appear in this strange drama? They are so vile! It was inherent in the legends of Prometheus and of Io that the gods involved therein should appear like men; but surely their anthropomorphism is here unnecessarily emphasized by Aeschylus. It seems as if the poet had tried in every way to make the gods appear as evil as possible. Not much is said about the other gods, but Zeus at least is vividly portrayed. He is arbitrary, irresponsible, violent, lustful, cruel, and ruthless. He is a tyrant. Yet we feel that he is a type of all the rest. Hera is lightly touched upon, but appears to be as human and cruel as her spouse. Hermes is truculent, servile, and ridiculous. Hephaestus alone appears reluctant to execute the cruel orders of his master. But all alike are enemies of Prometheus, and equally hated by him. They are hostile to the human race. Nearly the whole play is devoted to the display of the vindictive cruelty of these gods to Prometheus, whose only fault was that he befriended man, and to Io, whose only fault was that she was lovely.

Are these the gods in whom Aeschylus believed? That he was a deeply religious man, and believed that gods really existed, is evident from his other dramas. But the Zeus or the Prometheus is very different from that mighty, inscrutable deity of whom the chorus in the Agamemnon sings, who rules the world with justice, and who, though he has set this law to be supreme for men, that 'Knowledge comes from suffering', has done this to promote righteousness in men, and not in wanton cruelty. The gods of the Prometheus are the gods of the traditional Greek mythology. They are not eternal. There have been other gods before them, and they themselves in turn will pass away. Real gods, if there be real gods, do not change; but men's conceptions of them change. The conceptions of the gods presented in the Prometheus are those which the Greeks of Aeschylus's time had inherited from a cruder and less spiritual age, embodied in their myths and sacred literature, and developed by the imagina-

tions of their poets and artists into characters as repulsive to the thoughtful Greeks of the fifth century before Christ as they are to us. Such gods as these are gods created by man in his own image and by him exalted until they enchain and torture the intelligence by which they were created, terrorize and disgust their creators. The intelligence by which they were created will survive them. But man alone can liberate the intelligence by which they may be reconstructed in accordance with man's own intellectual and spiritual development. For such gods have no objective reality; they exist only in men's minds.

This play of Aeschylus is complete in itself. It matters little whether or not it was one of a trilogy treating a single subject, like the several chapters of a book. We know little, practically nothing, of the other plays which are commonly grouped with this. We do not know with certainty that they were grouped together by their author. It is not necessary that we should. The problem with which Aeschylus was dealing in this extant play is definitely presented to us.

The same problem arises for every set of men who, having advanced beyond a more primitive stage of their development, seek to hold fast religious conceptions inherited from an earlier period, because these are incorporated in a literature which they consider sacred, and because all are reluctant to abandon or reconstruct their religious beliefs. The same problem faces the world to-day, and for the same reasons. We should not wonder, then, that Aeschylus in his time dealt with this problem in veiled language, and so cautiously that many in all these intervening centuries have failed to recognize, or at least to agree upon, his deeper meaning.

Those who speak out plainly on such subjects are often held in great dishonor, and are thought by many to be doing incalculable harm. Such protestants have arisen in all ages; there are many of them now. But little good will come of all their argument until the time is ripe. Till then the wisest speak with caution, and try not to defeat their purpose by extreme statements which might destroy beliefs which many hold most dear, and which many would be unable to reconstruct or to replace.

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## REVIEWS

The Greek Theater of the Fifth Century Before Christ (University of California Publications in Classical Philology: Volume 7). By James Turney Allen. Berkeley (1920). Pp.119. Illustrated. \$1.25.

Many books and articles have been appearing on the Greek theater and drama in the last few years, the most important being R. C. Flickinger, The Greek Theater and its Drama (compare my review in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 12.69-71); J. Geffcken, Die Griechische Tragödie (Teubner, 1918: reviewed by Professor Edward Fitch, in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

14. 100-101); Romagnoli, Il Teatro Greco (Milan, 1918); and a book entitled Das Theaterwesen im Altertum, which has recently been published in Germany by Miss Margarete Bieber, giving in 109 views and descriptions of most of the theaters that have been preserved, and of costumes, masks, etc.—a very thorough corpus of the Greek and Roman theater. Professor Allen has been interested in the Greek drama for many years and has already published several articles and reviews on literary and archaeological problems connected with the Greek drama (e. g. Greek Acting in the Fifth Century, University of California Publications in Classical Philology 2. 279-289). But the problem of the reconstruction of the fifth century theater at Athens has had for him a strange fascination, and he has devoted many hours to it, and finally got a clue to its solution in the spring of 1918, whose nature he indicated in his short article, The Key to the Reconstruction of the Fifth Century Theater at Athens (University of California Publications in Classical Philology 5. 55-58). The nature of this clue is set forth in Chapter III of the present book (20-42), The Theater of the Fifth Century, and is illustrated by Fig. 20 on page 30. Here the inner corners of the *paraskenia* of the Lycurgian scene-building, nearest the orchestra, coincide exactly with the inner edge of the retaining wall of the old orchestra-terrace; and it is shown that the inner sides of the *paraskenia* and the wall connecting them at the rear exactly fit the circle of the old terrace (for the early fifth-century theater see Professor Allen's own interesting model, reproduced on page 23, Fig. 16). The north-south diameter of the remaining portion of this terrace is the same as that of the fourth-century orchestra; for, if a line be drawn between the *paraskenia* and at the same distance back from their front line as the Hellenistic *proskenion* stood back of the Hellenistic *paraskenia* (about four feet), this line is an exact chord of the outer circle of the old terrace-wall. These certainly are striking coincidences and, in view of the Greek love of geometry and symmetry—dynamic, static, or otherwise—, they are hardly accidental, so that it would seem that Professor Allen has really made an important discovery. He draws the conclusion that, before the theater was moved, the scene-building had been erected both on and about the orchestra-terrace. In other words, the Lycurgian orchestra was merely a counterpart of the Sophoclean and Euripidean orchestra, which was probably used also for the last plays of Aeschylus. Professor Flickinger says that the fifth-century theater had neither *paraskenia* nor a columned proscenium; but Professor Allen shows the great probability of *paraskenia*. In view of the variety of scenes required by the Greek plays it is unlikely that there was such a proscenium as Professor Allen reconstructs. Professor Allen further thinks (see especially Chapter VIII, The Origin of the Proskenion, 107-116), that the fifth-century scene-building served as a model for the building which replaced it later. He thinks (Chapter IV, The Evidence of the Dramas, 43-68) that the *skene* (= 'hut' or 'booth'), which was at